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No. 67.

THE HAUNTING THOUGHT.

BY E. E. REXFORD.

I can not tell you why it is,
When sitting by your side,
But there's a yearning in my heart
For something unsupplied.
The thoughts keep on whispering thro' my brain,
And haunt me o'er and o'er,
Until I often say to you,
"Why don't you love me more?"
Sometimes I hold your hands in mine,
And whisper tender words,
Until my heart seems vocal with
The melody of birds.
But the haunting thought is always there,
To whisper o'er and o'er,
And haunt me till I say to you,
"Why don't you love me more?"
It can not be that in your heart
No fond love answers mine,
For you have whispered, many times,
The words forever true.
And the haunting thought will rise,
To whisper o'er and o'er,
Its doubts, until I say to you,
"Why don't you love me more?"

The Detective's Ward:

THE FORTUNES OF A BOWERY GIRL.

BY AGILE PENNE,
AUTHOR OF "ORPHAN NELL, THE ORANGE GIRL,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

A STRANGE GIRL.

"WHEN am I to see this gentleman?" the girl asked, suddenly.

"To-morrow afternoon," the detective replied.

"Where?"

"At his house. I am to take you there."

"I don't want to go!" Lill exclaimed, abruptly.

"Eh?" cried Peters, in utter astonishment.

"I say that I don't want to go to see this old gent!" said the girl, petulantly, a pout upon her full lips.

"Don't want to go?" The shrewd detective was utterly astounded.

"No; I never saw him but once, and I don't care if I never see him again," Lill replied, a look of vexation upon her face.

"But, he may be able to tell you something about your parents," Peters urged.

"What do I care for 'em?" the girl exclaimed, quickly. "They never did nothing for me. I don't care whether I ever see 'em or not. They must have had cruel hearts to leave me in the power of Jocky all these long years. A rough bringing up I've had. The Bowery has been my father and mother; leastways it alders protected me. Many's the night I've slept on the cold stones, afeard to go home, 'cos Jocky'd beat me. I've curled myself up like a dog in a dark corner and slept and dreamed of a home such as some girls have—a home all nice and warm; plenty of loving faces 'round me and kind words, instead of blows and curses."

"And yet now, when that home is offered you, you say that you don't want to go," said Peters, whose naturally kind heart failed for the friendless girl.

"I don't know any thing about him—the gent, I mean," the girl replied. "Why should he trouble himself 'bout me? I don't believe that I've got any father or mother anywhere in this world. I never seed anybody trouble themselves 'bout anybody else yet, unless they thought they could make something by it."

The detective fully realized how dark the life of the girl had been by the one little sentence. The cold, hard cry of the world was in her mouth. Each for himself, none for his brother.

"Well, but won't you go and see the gentleman to-morrow?" the detective asked.

"I'd rather not!" the girl exclaimed quickly.

"But he has given me twenty dollars to buy you new clothes. He wants to see you all dressed up like a lady."

A wifish look came over the girl's face, and her eyes brightened up for a moment at the words of the detective. It was only for a moment though; and then again the dull, vacuous expression was on her features.

"I ain't a lady," she said, slowly. "Fine feathers don't alers make fine birds."

"But this old gentleman will make a lady of you," the officer urged. "Dressed up nicely, few girls on this street will look any better than you. Why, Lillian—I suppose your name is Lillian, or maybe, Lily?"

"No, Lillian."

"Well, as I was going to say: when you're dressed up, you'll look very pretty."

"Do you think I'm pretty?" the girl asked, suddenly.

The abruptness of the question as well as its nature astonished Peters.

"Yes, I think that you are very pretty," he said, slowly. "When you are dressed up, you will be beautiful."

A smile passed rapidly over the girl's face, and as she looked into the face of the detective, he saw a strange, peculiar light shining in the full black orbs of the child. Never before had he seen such a light in the eyes of any one of womankind.

The smile and the look were the girl's answer to the speech of the detective.

Finding that she did not speak, Peters continued:

"This old gentleman is wealthy—more money than he knows what to do with. He either knows something about your parents, or else he has taken a fancy to you. At any rate, I am sure from what he said to me, that he intends to look after you for the future."

Again the girl did not reply, but walked



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silently on for a few moments, evidently in deep thought.

"If my father is alive, and he should find me, he would have the right to make me do as he said?" she asked, abruptly.

"Undoubtedly," replied Peters, somewhat astonished at the question.

"Do you think that this old gentleman is my father?" she asked, quickly.

"No, I do not." The detective began to wonder why the girl was asking all these odd questions.

"Then he has no right to make me do as he pleases?"

"Of course not, unless you give the right by allowing him to adopt you as his daughter."

"Not much, you bet!" cried Lill, suddenly, and with great determination in her earnest features.

Again the words grated on the ear of the detective. Yet he had heard many a woman use the slang of the streets before.

The quick eyes of the girl detected the look of annoyance upon the officer's face.

"There it is again!" she cried, in an injured tone. "What have I done? I know that I either said or done something wrong, 'cos you wouldn't look that way if I hadn't made you feel bad. What is it?"

"Well, nothing particular," replied Peters, slowly; and in his own mind he instantly decided that the Bowery Girl was one of the strangest characters that he had ever met with in all his life.

"Yes, there is!" said the girl, aggrieved.

"It's real mean that you won't tell a feller."

And Peters detected a tear glistening in the dark eye of the girl—tears in the eyes that had only flashed lightning at the Italian's threat.

"Well, if you must know: why do you use those rough words?"

"What words?"

"Why, that slang; 'you bet' and 'not much'?"

The girl looked at the speaker in wonder.

"Yes, I think that you are very pretty," he said, slowly. "When you are dressed up, you will be beautiful."

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silently on for a few moments, evidently in deep thought.

"No; I'll take care of that."

"And the old gentleman can't make me go with him?"

"Not unless you want to."

"That's all right!" Lill exclaimed, with an air of great satisfaction. "Then, I'll stay with you!"

"Stay with me!" cried the detective, in utter astonishment.

"Yes—I haven't got anybody else; and I'll stay with you, 'cos I like you—you've been good to me."

The face of the girl Peters read perfect faith and trust.

"But, what will you do with me?" Peters asked, in bewilderment.

"Any thing you want me to. I can wash dishes, and sweep, and clean house. I used to alders clean the saloon for Jocky. You can take me home to your wife, and I'll tell her how good you've been to me, and how I want to pay you for it; and she can teach me jest what she wants me to do."

Peters listened attentively, while the girl sketched out the new career that opened so brilliantly before her. He watched the eager face, the beaming eyes, and the full, red lips, rich in their dewy freshness.

"But, I haven't got any wife!" Peters exclaimed.

"Oh!" Lill was disappointed. She thought for a moment. "Don't you know any nice lady that you could get for a wife, so she could teach me?" she asked, with a glowing face, as the bright thought came to her.

Peters was obliged, reluctantly, to confess that he didn't.

Again the girl was silent. The odd, thoughtful look, that made her seem old beyond her years, came back over her face.

"Oh, I know!" she cried, suddenly, her face brightening up again; "you can give me some money to buy some things, and I can go and sell them on the Bowery, and bring the money to you, as I used to do with all in his life."

"Well, if you must know: why do you use those rough words?"

"What words?"

"Why, that slang; 'you bet' and 'not much'?"

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"Yes, I think that you are very pretty," he said, slowly. "When you are dressed up, you will be beautiful."

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Again the girl did not reply, but walked

silently on for a few moments, evidently in deep thought.

The sudden change again astonished the detective. He began to think that the child had strange whims.

By this time the party of three had arrived at the office of the firm of Peters & Henry, on Broadway, just above Broome street.

The front room was the office, the back one a snug bedchamber.

"There, Lill, you stay here to-night; we'll go to a hotel, and come for you in the morning. You can lock yourself in. Good-night."

The Bowery girl had sweet dreams that night.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RECOGNITION.

ALGERNON shook his head, dubiously, at the confident words of the gallant colonel.

"My uncle going to be married? Oh, no—he has no idea of that sort," the young man said.

The colonel stroked his mustache, thoughtfully.

"Not to be married, eh? Well, I confess, then, that my wits are at fault. But you say that you will not inherit your uncle's property?"

"Exactly."

"Has another relative appeared—one nearer than yourself?"

"Yes; now you have guessed it."

"But, I have often heard you say—that you were the only relative that your uncle has."

"So I've always thought, until I was informed by the old gentleman, an hour or so ago, that I might expect to see his daughter very soon."

"His daughter!" exclaimed the colonel, evidently in great amazement.

"Yes," replied Algernon, somewhat astonished at the colonel's manner.

A strange look was on the face of the Southerner—a look which puzzled the young man. He could not understand what possible interest, except that dictated by friendship, the colonel could have in his words.

"You look surprised, colonel," Algernon said.

"Oh, no—not particularly; only, as I have often heard you say that you were the only relative of your uncle, the sudden appearance of a daughter astonishes me a little," the colonel replied.

"It astonishes me a great deal. Why, you could have knocked me down with a feather."

"Then, this daughter is to inherit all your uncle's property?"

"Yes."

The colonel caressed his long mustache in an absent manner. The lines upon his face told that he was deep in thought.

"Well, I'll go!" she said, with determination.

"I can give you some information," the colonel replied, meaningly.

"Information about what?" asked the young man, in wonder.

"About your uncle's daughter."

"What?" what can you possibly know about it?" exclaimed Algernon, astonished.

"More than you think," the colonel replied, with a knowing smile. "I knew your uncle years ago."

"You did?"

"Yes," replied the Southerner, quietly, enjoying the young man's astonishment.

"But I never heard you say any thing about it."

"Very likely," the colonel said, carelessly. "I never thought it necessary to mention it; but it is the truth. Your uncle and I were quite intimate years ago. And now for the information. In the first place, I am almost certain that your uncle was never married."

"But this daughter?" exclaimed the young man, in astonishment.

"A mystery which I will solve before long."

"But still, if he makes her his heir, it doesn't matter whether she is his daughter or not. His wealth will go to her."

"Very true. At present it is of course impossible to decide upon any plan of action. The daughter must come. We must see her."

"I say 'we,' for I assure you that, for pure friendship's sake, I feel deeply interested in this affair," the colonel said, blandly.

"Well, as I said, we must see the daughter—see what she is like, and then decide what must be done."

"Colonel, to be frank with you, I must have some of my uncle's wealth!" Algernon exclaimed, in a strangely emphatic tone for one of his weak nature. "If the girl is really his daughter, then, of course, she has a better claim to it than I; but if she is a stranger, not connected by the ties of blood, then, she robs me of my rightful inheritance."

"Exactly, my dear boy!" exclaimed the colonel, decidedly. "In my opinion, you are fully justified in using any and all means to prevent the consummation of this foul wrong; and I feel that, bound as I am by the ties of friendship, I am justified in aiding you to the extent of my power."

He leaned back in his chair, and looked digested.

"Colonel, you shall have a fair share of the property if you succeed in getting it for me!" Algernon said.

"Don't speak of the filthy lucre!" the Southerner exclaimed, loftily. "We settle as to terms hereafter. The first thing is to see what the daughter is like."

"When she arrives, I'll arrange it so that you shall see her," Algernon said.

"Yes," and the colonel rose to his feet. "Might I suggest a promenade down Broadway?"

"Not at present," Algernon replied, in a slight confusion that did not escape the vigilant eyes of the colonel.

"Another engagement, eh?"

"I—I was talking with Miss Blake when you came, and I promised her that I would return to her as soon as you were gone."

"Dreadful spoony, my dear boy, eh? Well, we all have a touch of it sooner or later in our lives. It's dencend awkward for you just now, I'm afraid; but time will tell."

Algernon accompanied the colonel down to the door. As they approached it, the door-bell rung. The young man opened the door. Peters, the detective, and Lill, the Bowery Girl, now dressed neatly in a plain dark suit, were standing on the step.

"Mr. Ollkoff in?" the detective asked.

"Yes, sir," Algernon replied, darting a glance at the colonel, as if to call his attention to the girl. "John"—Algernon addressed the servant who was just approaching—"show this gentleman and lady into the parlor, and call Mr. Ollkoff."

The servant obeyed the order.

Hardly had the three entered the parlor, when the young man turned eagerly to the colonel.

"Did you see her?" he asked, but then paused in astonishment as he caught sight of the face of his friend. It was as white as a sheet, and great drops of perspiration stood like waxen beads upon his forehead. The usually cool and smiling colonel was strangely excited.

"Yes, yes; I saw her," the colonel murmured.

"Why, what is the matter, colonel? You are as white as a sheet."

"Am I?" The Southerner made a feeble attempt at a smile.

"Oh, no; a sudden faintness, that's all."

The colonel took his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the drops of perspiration from his forehead.

"I shouldn't be surprised if that girl was the expected daughter of my uncle," Algernon said, in a tone of conviction.

"Perhaps so," the other replied, absently. "She's pretty; did you notice what splendid dark eyes she has?"

"Eyes?—oh, yes!" The colonel was answering like a man in a dream.

"What on earth is the matter with you, colonel?" exclaimed the young man, in astonishment.

"Oh, nothing," and with a great effort, the Southerner roused himself from his abstraction. "So you think that young lady is the one who is going to take your uncle's fortune from you?"

"Yes."

"Well, of course I can't say whether she is the daughter or not; but, if she is, you give me a note for five thousand dollars, payable when you come into your uncle's property, and I'll agree to remove this girl from your way."

"You wouldn't attempt any violence?"

"My dear boy, I am a gentleman, I trust. I shall use only the strong arm of the law. Is it a bargain?" The compact was made.

CHAPTER IX.

LILL'S PROTECTOR.

The detective and Lill were shown into the parlor by the servant, who then went in quest of Mr. Ollkoff.

Lill looked around her in astonishment. Never in all her life had she seen such handsome furniture, such splendid paintings; such evidences of wealth and luxury.

Peters, with a quiet smile upon his shrewd face, watched the girl as her eyes wandered wonder around the room.

"Well, Lill, this isn't much like the Bowery, is it?" he asked.

"Not much, you—oh! I forgot!" and the girl put her hand to her mouth in great confusion. "I forgot that I said that I wouldn't say those words any more. It's hard work to remember, but I will, though."

Peters laughed at the frank confession.

"But, what do you think of this place?"

"Oh! it's beautiful!" the girl replied, an earnest expression upon her face. "I used to dream of just such a place as this, often, when I've gone to sleep in a doorway. But I never thought that there was any such nice places in New York; it seems like fairy land."

"This is dead earnest?"

"Yes: I've often wondered when I've seen the ladies riding in their carriages, all

dressed up in silks and velvets, what kind of places they had to live in, and whether they eat off of gold and silver dishes or not. But, it always seemed to me as if they belonged to a different world from the one I lived in."

The entrance of Mr. Ollkoff put an end to the speech of the girl.

Peters rose and introduced Lill.

There was a strange look upon the face of the old merchant as he looked upon the girl—a peculiar light in his eye that few in this world had ever seen there before.

Long and earnestly he looked upon the girl.

"Do you remember me?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," she replied.

"How would you like to come here and live with me—be my daughter?" he said, his voice kind and gentle.

"If he wants me to," Lill replied, looking at the detective.

Ollkoff turned to Peters, in astonishment, at the abrupt sentence.

"You see, sir, this young lady looks upon me as a sort of protector," Peters explained. "I came into the saloon, which has been her home, at quite a critical time last night. Two roughs were about to assault her. My sudden appearance saved her from them, and she has taken it into her head to consider herself a sort of a ward of mine. I have explained to her, as well as I could with the slight knowledge I possessed, what your intentions are, and she is perfectly willing to do as I say."

"Yes; if he says I must stop, I will," said Lill, frankly.

"I understand," the merchant said. "I take a very strong interest in you, my girl. You do not seem like a stranger to me, because you are the perfect image of one whom I knew a very long time ago. That one I am sure was your mother."

"What was her name?" asked Lill, suddenly.

"Louise."

"That was my mother's name!" cried the girl. "I know, cos Jocky's wife told me so, once."

"Jocky?" questioned Ollkoff.

Peters explained who Jocky was, and gave the merchant a brief account of the life that the girl was leading when he had found her.

"It is as I thought; you are her child. Your mother was a very dear friend of mine, and for her sake, I wish to have the right to take care of you for the future. What do you say? Do you think that you could be happy here with me?"

"As 'hain't," Lill replied, pointing to the detective. "I'll do any thing he says."

"She has great faith in you," Ollkoff said to Peters, smiling.

"Oh, yes," the detective replied, rather embarrassed by the strong partiality evinced by the girl.

"Then, Mr. Peters, I must apply to you."

"I'm perfectly willing, sir. I've already told Miss Lillian—that's her name, sir—that you will take good care of her."

"Then, if this gentleman is willing, you are?" the merchant asked, addressing Lill.

"Yes, sir," Lill replied, slowly; "but sir, if I come to live with you, I won't see this gentleman any more, will I?" And there was an anxious look upon the girl's face as she put the question.

"Certainly you will," Ollkoff replied; "he can call to see you whenever you wish him to."

"You see, sir, he's the only friend I've got in the world, and I've only just got him, and I don't want to go back on him so soon," Lill said, earnestly. And as she looked at Peters' face, she saw the smile there that her odd expression had called forth.

"There!" she cried, petulantly. "I've gone and said something that I hadn't ought to. It's a-tryin' to tell me, sir, how to speak properly, but, I'm such a stupid head, I'll never learn."

Lill's tone was one of thorough despair. Ollkoff laughed. The innocence of the girl pleased him.

"Oh, you will learn, in time, my dear; you mustn't be impatient. And, as this gentleman has commenced to teach you, suppose we arrange to have him come here two or three times a week, and so continue his lessons?"

The eyes of Lill sparkled with delight at the idea.

"Will that please you?" Ollkoff asked, though he plainly perceived the joy of the girl in her face.

"Oh, yes, sir! ever so much!" she exclaimed.

So it was arranged that every Wednesday and Saturday the detective was to call and spend the afternoon with Lill.

Peters then took his departure, much to the regret of the girl, whose dark eyes filled with tears as she shook hands with him in the hall.

"Good-by," she murmured; "don't you forget me; I shan't forget you, I'll try very hard to be a good girl, and remember what you told me about saying those ugly words." Then she glanced carefully around her, as if seeking to discover whether they were observed or not. But no one was in sight. Ollkoff had discreetly remained in the parlor. Peters noticed the look and wondered at it.

"You won't be angry?" she asked, slowly, with downcast eyes.

"Angry at what?" exclaimed the detective, in astonishment.

Again the girl glanced around her; then, timidly, she came close to the detective, put her plump arms around his neck and held him tightly.

The detective laughed and kissed the little mouth.

"You poor child!" he said, caressingly patting her cheek.

"You are the only friend that I have ever had, and if you hadn't kissed me before you went away, I should have felt so bad."

"Good-by, again. I'll come Saturday."

And the next instant the door closed behind the officer.

Lill returned to the parlor, and seating herself by the side of the old merchant at his request, she related to him the simple story of her life.

Ollkoff listened attentively. He watched the face of the girl as she spoke. There was a restless, vacant expression upon it which did not escape his attention. Nor was he long in doubt as to the cause of the look. The girl missed her protector. In the presence of Peters she seemed to be a different being.

Skillfully, Ollkoff turned the conversation, and spoke of the officer.

The moment she began to speak of him, and relate how he had rescued her from her persecutors, in the underground saloon, her whole manner changed. The warm blood flushed her cheeks; her eyes sparkled, and

her voice was earnest as she told of the deeds of the man, who was a hero in her eyes.

A peculiar look came over the face of the old man. It was not noticed by the girl, whose eyes, fixed on vacancy, saw, in imagination, the face of the one who had befriended her.

"Confound it!" the merchant muttered to himself, as the girl finished her story. "I see I shall have to adopt the detective officer also. The girl will never be satisfied without him, in this world."

The shrewd guess of the old man was correct. The detective was all the world to the girl whom he had rescued from misery.

Leaving the girl to wonder at the splendor that surrounded her, and the old merchant to become more and more interested in the waif that he had transplanted from the squalid misery of the streets to the hot-house life of the parlor, we will follow the officer.

Strange thoughts were passing through his mind as he slowly descended the steps that led to the sidewalk.

The rich perfume of Lill's warm kiss was yet lingering on his lips; still—in imagination—he felt the soft pressure of the plump, white arms around his neck. Memories of bygone days came back to him. Again he was a lad, standing in the staid old Vermont village. Again he heard the whirr of the spindles that gave life to the little hamlet. Again he looked in the coquettish blue eyes of the only girl he had ever loved, and heard her calmly say that all was over between them.

A mist came over the clear, cold eyes of the detective, as he thought of his boyish days—thought how he had once loved—how, despairing, he had left the quiet country village, and plunged into the bustle of the overgrown metropolis.

"It's strange! What brought Debby Stark into my mind?" he muttered, as he walked along the street, deep in meditation.

"Debby was a pretty girl, but she wasn't for me."

Then the detective turned the corner of the street, and, as he did so, he raised his eyes. Across the street, he beheld the boot-black, Shrimpy, gesticulating wildly to him.

Peters looked at the boy in astonishment.

"What does he want, I wonder?" he exclaimed.

The boy ran across the street, and approached Peters, with a beaming smile on his dirty face.

"How are you, boss? Got something peculiar to tell you," the boy said, mysteriously.

"Split it out!" Peters replied, laconically.

"I don't want 'em for to see me a talkin' with you, or they'd chaw my ear right off!" cried the boy.

(To be continued—Continued in No. 65.)

The Winged Whale: OR, THE MYSTERY OF RED RUPERT.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,
AUTHOR OF "SCARLET HAND," "HEART OF FIRE,"
"WOLF DEMON," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

FORTH from the darkness, into the bright circle of light that the lantern dimly cast, stepped the tall form of the Indian chief—The-sneake-with-three-tails.

Rupert and Isabel looked upon him with surprise. How he had gained entrance to the prison-cell passed their comprehension. He had evidently not entered by the door, for he advanced from the opposite side of the room.

moodily; "our prey has escaped us, and taken the girl with him, too."

"They can not have proceeded far. We will proceed to search for them at once."

The three left the sled and hastened to the barracks occupied by the soldiers. Hardly had they reached their destination, when a horseman dashed into the yard. The sides of the steed were white with lather, and his heaving flanks told of headlong speed.

The rider recognized the Spanish officer, and almost tumbled out of his saddle in his haste to dismount.

The Spaniard recognized the exhausted rider. He was the proprietor of a plantation on the Perdido.

"Well, senior?" demanded the commandante, unable to guess the cause of the alarm of the stranger.

"The Americans!" the horseman gasped.

"Ah!" The commandante started. "He scented danger in the air."

"On the march hither—an army, senior—horse, foot and artillery!" continued the man, in breathless haste.

"On the march hither?" questioned the officer, in amazement.

"Yes, senior, under General Jackson. The forces come from New Orleans, and they are marching straight for Pensacola. They crossed the river and encamped on my plantation. I learned the object of the expedition and took horse at once to warn you."

"Thanks, senior; you have performed a great service," said the commandante, courteously. "Roque, see that the senior and his horse are both attended to. Excuse me, senior; I must attend to this matter."

The commandante and his son proceeded at once to the quarters of the former.

"What is the meaning of this movement on the part of the Americans, father?" asked Estevan.

"I have expected an attack for some time," the commandante replied, thoughtfully. "You remember the British man-of-war that put into our port and landed the agents who sought to stir up the Indians, and induce them to take sides against the Americans?"

"The 'Shannon'?" Yes."

"By some means, I know not how, the news of that affair reached General Jackson, who commands the American forces at New Orleans. Through my spies in that city, I have been informed that the American General threatened to attack Pensacola, claiming that we have forfeited our right to be classed as neutrals by affording aid and succor to the English."

"A war, then, is upon us?"

"Yes, and we are ill-prepared to meet it," the commandante said, thoughtfully. "We have but three hundred men in the garrison, and our artillery is almost worthless."

"But it can not be possible that the American General leads his whole force against us. That would leave New Orleans unguarded, and the English commanders have been threatening to attack the city for some time."

"It is probably only a division of cavalry, although our messenger spoke of artillery," the commandante said.

"We must not place too great a reliance upon his words; he is evidently thoroughly frightened."

"If it is only a cavalry squadron, we can laugh at them from behind the walls of the fort. And, even if they have artillery, it can not consist of any thing but light field-pieces."

"Worth but little against our ramparts," Estevan said.

"True; and I do not think that the Americans will attempt to storm the fort. With three hundred men, and our artillery, bad as it is, we can hold it against two thousand soldiers, unless they are provided with siege guns, to batter down our walls."

"We'll fight them to the last, then?"

"We have no other course open to us. It is useless to deny the truth, when the truth is known—we have aided the English in their war upon the Americans. We must meet the consequences, let them be what they may."

By this time the two had reached the house of the commandante. A man habited as a fisherman hastily approached them. It was the Spaniard called Pablo, who figured in the opening chapter of our story.

The fisherman doffed his cap respectfully as he approached the two officers.

"Pardon, seniors," he said, "but I have something to tell you that perhaps you would like to hear."

"What is it?" asked the commandante, a touch of impatience in his voice.

"The senorita Isabel—"

"Ah!" cried both the Spaniards, in a breath. They were all attention now.

"As I sat by my boat on the beach, a strange senor came up to me and asked me for the loan of my boat for a sail. As he offered me a gold-piece, I readily consented. He got in and sailed off a little way, then returned and landed on the beach nearer to the city. From behind my hut I watched him. The senorita Isabel came down to the beach, got into the boat, and then they put to sea. I watched, until I lost them in the gloom of the night. Then I suddenly thought that, perhaps, something was wrong, and that it would be as well that you should know what the senorita had done as to be in ignorance of it—so I thought I'd come and tell you what I have seen."

"You are an honest fellow!" cried Estevan, quickly; "here is a gold-piece for your pains."

With many a bow the fisherman withdrew.

"What is to be done, father?"

"I do not know," replied the commandante, a strange expression upon his face.

"'Twas the American, of course, who took the boat. I know the haunt that he is making for with his prize. I chased him there the other night, but, by some devilish jugglery, he raised an awful form from out the dark waters, and froze the courage of my men. Do you not see the game of this fellow? It is probable that he has a score or more of his pirates secreted in the woods that fringe this lagoon—his lurking place. He will wait there till Jackson advances; then, under the protection of the soldiers, Isabel is lost to us forever."

"What do you propose to do?" asked the father.

"Give me fifty of our men. I will take the coasting schooner that now lies in port, mount a piece of artillery on her, proceed to this bayou, and hunt these reptiles from their holes. I'll attack them early in the morning."

"Be it so—you shall have the soldiers; but, as you value your soul, do not harm this Rupert," said the commandante, solemnly.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 57.)

THE CAT-A-STROPHE.

BY LEPIDUS.

Think you that man alone can bathe light,
And cause great hosts to fall before his might?
Think you for him alone the field grows red,
And thickly scattered over with the dead?

Be not deceived; my simple tale review:
Such thoughts will vanish ere you read it through.

Two or three Englishmen were following,
Resolved on conflict, gathered to one place.

Kilkenny? Yes, Kilkenny was one place.

Round which they gathered and at which they fought.

From town and country, whether near or far,

With one accord hastened to the fray.

With the sword, the battle, the roar,

As where 'twas narrow, often blocked the way.

The lame, the halt, the blind, the tame,

The black, the white, and every color came.

Song raised in voice, and louder than the roar,

And song worse than that practised every night.

Soon, face to face, in two long lines they form,

As though the breeze yet drearied as the storm,

And as the storm-clouds, rising in its course,

Shows fiery bolts, and thunders thunders roar,

With one accord, along the roar,

Then, glaring in deep wrath from side to side,

"Hear ye, hear ye! Advance! advance!" they cried.

Oh, then, how raged the angry battle there!

Like the wind, when tempests roar,

Both young and old in one strange war combine,

And every color fills the seething line.

Ecclensis Jove upon his chariot flew,

And flew his bolts along the raging crew,

And pulled Death on every side,

With one accord, along the roar,

Then, glaring in deep wrath from side to side,

"Hear ye, hear ye! Advance! advance!" they cried.

But, now, how drearly the scene!

As though the wind still roar,

As though the tempest still roar,

As though the storm still roar,

As though the tempest still roar,

Saturday Journal

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MR. AIKEN'S NEW SERIAL
OVERLAND KIT;
OR,
The Idol of White Pine.

It is with great pleasure that we announce another romance from the pen of Mr. Albert W. Aiken, undisputedly the most brilliant of all our American authors, and one whose popularity among THE PEOPLE increases with each story that he writes.

The scene of OVERLAND KIT is located among the mines of the famous White Pine region. The mining camp of "Spur City," will be readily recognized by any White-Pine, though disguised by a fictitious appellation.

The romance is a weird and wild tale—founded on fact though—of the mining region. It is pervaded by the balm of the resinous pines, swaying in the breeze cooled by the white peaks of the rocky Sierras.

The characters are strange enough, but all are drawn true to nature. OVERLAND KIT, from whom the story takes its title, is a reckless "Road Agent"—as the miners call the highwaymen-like gentlemen who relieve the overland coaches of their gold dust. But, contrary to their usual custom, his face is covered by a mask, and there are rumors that the Road Agent is a man of high position in the territory. Then we have "Ginger Bill," so called from his huge red beard—the driver of the coach, a true Western character, full of odd sayings, smacking of dry humor; "Dick Talbot," the man who gets his living by playing cards—the only man in Spur City who wears a white shirt—who is called by some "Gentleman Dick," by others, "Injin Dick"—the best two-handed sparring, the cutest wrestler, the keenest shot and the coolest hand in all the Reese river valley—a man tarred with the brush of evil, yet possessing many virtues; "Dandy Jim, the man-from Red-Dog," the comical bully, who "cavorts" round—who is "half sea-lion and half grizzly bear"; Solomon Rennet, the old New York lawyer and his unprincipled son, who scheme for the fortune of the wealthy orphan, Bernice Gwynn, who, under the protection of the old lawyer, visits the mining region, in quest of the wild youth who fled from New York, to evade the law's stern grasp, ten years before; and last, though not least among the prominent characters of this unique life romance, comes Jimmie Johnson, "the gal who runs the Eldorado saloon," the waif of the mines; whose red-gold hair and cool, gray eyes, possess wondrous fascinations.

In the story, the working of the terrible "Vigilantes" is fully described; also the lynch trial, in which the representatives from "Paddy's Flat" and "Gopher Gully," rival mining camps, figure prominently.

OVERLAND KIT will create a great sensation. It is the truest picture of border life that has ever been written.

Mr. Aiken pronounces it his best story!

Footscap Papers.

Mary's Lamb.

WHEN Napoleon Bonaparte, the great English dramatic poet, wrote the celebrated poem of Mary's lamb, it was under the inspiration of evanescent mutton-chops. I don't pretend to say that he might not have done worse; nor that he could have done better; nor that he did not write it at all, for he did greater things than that. The poem is simple, effective and sublime. Let us look at it critically.

"Mary had a little lamb."

It is evident that the animal was small by the use of the word "little"; if it was big, the poet would not have said little, or if it was big, and he said it was little, then he lied, and should have his poetic license revoked forthwith.

We also read that it was a lamb, therefore we know it was not a pig, a calf, or any thing else. If it was not a lamb, then the poet has subjected himself to be doubted as a correct chronicler. He fails to say what breed the lamb belonged to—whether it was a Merino, South-Down, Shanghi, or battering-ram lamb. This part is left to the imagination, as is most proper, for we must not expect poets to tell all things.

"Its fleece was white as snow."

This is a pure line—snow being indicative of purity. If it had been a black lamb, and our poet willfully said it was white, his reputation should suffer to the fullest extent of the law.

"And everywhere that Mary went

The lamb was sure to go."

We see that Mary was not a stay-at-home girl, if our poet is to be believed, and that wherever she went the lamb was sure to go, and never failed, or the words "sure" and "everywhere" would not have been used.

"It went with her to school one day."

We infer from this that it was no night school which Mary attended, for it reads "one day," and night is a different thing from day on account of the absence of the sun.

"Which was against the rule."

The constitution of that school expressly declares that "no animals of the lamb persuasion can possibly be eligible to scholarships and seats in this institution." A good rule, to be sure.

"It made the children laugh and play

To see a lamb at school."

From these lines we discover that children went to this school, and from their mirth we judge that that was the first time they ever got lambed in that kind of way, although they were perfectly familiar with the other kind of lamb.

"And so the teacher turned him out."

We perceive there was a teacher at this school, but the poet neglects to state how much a month and board his salary was; nor does he sing whether he turned him a summer out or not, but it is probable.

"But, still he lingered near,
And waited patiently about
Till Mary did appear."

It is very evident that the lamb didn't run home and make a great fuss over his expulsion, from the fact that he lingered near; probably he sat on the steps or on the fence, waiting, with patience, till Mary would come out, which he knew she would do about twelve o'clock, if his watch was right.

"And then he ran to her—"

Not to upset her calculations, as many a little girl would have feared, but to lay his head upon her arm,

"You'll keep me from all harm."

Expressive of great confidence in Mary. You see, the poet does not say the lamb actually did utter these words, for he says as if to say. The words as if uttering or preventing what would be one of the most remarkable cases on record since the days of Balaam's rabbit.

"What makes the lamb love Mary so?"

The eager children say?

What is curious here is that the children couldn't ask this question without crying, though it really is an affecting question.

"Oh, Mary loves the lamb, you know,"

The teacher did reply."

Hence it was a case of mutual affection, although it may be inferred that the lamb never told its love.

But, with what a Miltonic moral does the last verse shew.

"Now, you each gentle animal

To you for life can bind,

And make it follow at your call,

If you are only kind."

Think of it, little girls and boys, what a nice thing it would be for you to be kind to snakes, turkey-buzzards, bull-frogs and bed-bugs, and have them follow you to school and every place else! Oh, it would be joyful! Try it!

What became of this celebrated little lamb the poet does not state; but, it is very probable that some hard-hearted butcher, with no poetry in him, resolved his historical body into matter of fact mutton, years and years ago, and its spirit passed to its lamb-kindred.

WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

This world runs to extremes. A man in a moment of passion strikes a fatal blow; he takes the life which the Creator gave and which only He should destroy.

Then on the wind rises the howl for blood. The newspapers, ever ready to pander to public opinion—while they are supposed to lead, but which, in reality, they control as much as the weathercock does the wind—take up the cry, blood!

Speedy justice! strike terror to the hearts of evildoers! These, and a hundred others of like meaning, fill their columns.

The trial is rushed through; the man convicted and hung; a second life follows the first, and justice is satisfied. Men breathe easier.

"This will be a warning—now we shall be safer—rogues will be careful."

A false assumption, when applied to capital punishment.

A man may commit murder in two different ways, as regards his state of mind.

In one, he coolly plans the deed; counts the cost, the gain thereby, and the risk of detection; fancies that he can escape the consequences, and, with the full knowledge of the foulness of the act, completes the deed.

This is manslaughter.

Suppose we hang both of these men, administer capital punishment, do we really increase the security of the citizens at large?

The hanging is supposed to be a warning; but, is it? Does it produce the desired effect?

Will the cool, calculating wretch who plans his crime, knowing that the gallows awaits him if he is detected, hesitate because there has been one or ten men hung for a similar act? No; he trusts to his shrewdness.

Will the poor, simple, effective and sublime. The poem is simple, effective and sublime. Let us look at it critically.

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"And so the teacher turned him out."

We perceive there was a teacher at this school, but the poet neglects to state how much a month and board his salary was; nor does he sing whether he turned him a summer out or not, but it is probable.

FIND the above, and you have the key to happiness. We are a restless set of individuals, always discontented and never satisfied with the station in which our Maker has placed us. We strive for money, and, when we obtain it, we want more and more until it proves to us a bane, instead of a blessing. The child reared in luxury, with

every thing it has need of—fine clothing, a sumptuous house to live in, the coziest of beds to repose on when sleep shuts up its little lids, is not content. No; he would like to throw all his fine clothing aside, and make mud-pies in the gutter; while the child of poverty who is forming those delicate dishes looks up at the more fortunate youth, and thinks he would be perfectly happy to be rich, and have so many fine things to eat and drink, and wear! Neither are satisfied, and each envies the other. Reverse their positions, and it would be just the same.

Susan loves Joseph, and Joseph feels the same love for Susan. As a natural consequence, they imagine they will have found perfect happiness when their marriage takes place. Somehow, Joseph seemed to imagine that Susan's hair would always look trim, and that she could wear her best dresses when she was washing, or scrubbing, or tending the young ones. He thinks it doesn't look right for her to wear her hair just tied up behind. Unreasonable man! How can he expect her to curl her hair, when she's been up with the baby all night, then went to washing all day, and finished up the delightful programme by darning his stockings, or replacing a couple of buttons.

"Now, you each gentle animal
To you for life can bind,
And make it follow at your call,
If you are only kind."

Expressive of great confidence in Mary. You see, the poet does not say the lamb actually did utter these words, for he says as if to say.

The words as if uttering or preventing what would be one of the most remarkable cases on record since the days of Balaam's rabbit.

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And make it follow at your call,<br

DEAD ALLIE.

BY FRANK S. FINN.

No little eyes in the doorway now
Look out for me the window-pane;
No gentle hands to bathe my brow,
They never will welcome me home again.
No merry laugh as I open the door
Will greet my footsteps weary and worn;
No childlike voice in my ears will pour
The joys and sorrows she's undergone.
No gentle hands to bind my neck
To tell me how much she's learned this day;
No little fingers my hair to deck
With roses and grasses gathered at play.
No little form to kneel at prayer,
And kiss the Saviour's most blessed name;
No gentle hands with tenderest care,
To shield from trouble and grief, or pain.
The little stone in the churchyard near,
With Allie's name in letters of gold,
Will start afresh the heartfelt tear.
As I mourn for Allie, so dead and cold.
But up in heaven know full well
And telling me not to grieve, or dwelt;
On the sorrow that soon will be ended Above.

That Ventilator!

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"CONFFOUND those girls! And I so fondly hoped to keep clear of any specimen of the softer sex—at least, during my rusticating period."

And Mr. Harry Bertrand, a handsome young fellow, leaned dejectedly—if not half vexedly—meerschaum in hand, away from the window that commanded a view of the croquet ground.

So he watched the smoke-wreaths circle gracefully away from his mustached mouth, wondering if his ladylike, Mrs. Fuller, was guilty of treachery, or had been guilty of downright falsehood, when she had solemnly assured him there were no lady boarders, and only one other gentleman—"a quiet enough gentleman, the dear knows." But, horror of horrors! Ossa and Pelton pried! shades of discomfited bachelors and vinegary old maids! here were two young girls who had suddenly lighted on the Fuller domicil, and, by some shrewd diplomatic skill, succeeded in ensconcing themselves in the very next room.

Mr. Harry Bertrand had seen their arrival, and shivered at sight of the six trunks, packed with feminine weapons of war, doubtless; he had groaned when he heard them laughing and chatting through the halls and in their rooms, although we must confess, for the sake of our hero—whom we are a little ashamed of because he did so dislike women generally, because one unwomanly one had proven traitress to her sex, and cruelly jilted him—we will confess, just to exculpate him a little, that he remarked the music of one of those girl's voices—how sweet it was, and how rippling her laugh was! But, more than all—far more than all—was the terrible wink Mrs. Fuller gave him, as, after an unexpected introduction to the young ladies in the hall, she nudged him meaningly.

"One of them's an heiress, you see—"

But, Harry scowled her into sudden silence. He was very much obliged, of course, for her disinterested kindness, but he detested heiresses, although they were, doubtless, very charming young ladies; and then he smiled very grandly, to show her how completely he was above such a thing as money-hunting. After dinner he went up to his room; he could hear the girls laughing and chatting directly under his window, on the croquet lawn, and drew away from the casement, with a vague idea that one of the two had the most silvery voice he ever had heard.

"In the next room! I think Mrs. Fuller might have known better than to give us an apartment next to his."

Fay Anderson's sweet, high voice spoke in most indignant terms.

"That's nonsense, Fay, now! As if Mr. Bertrand's occupancy of the next room can annoy us, unless, indeed, my dear Miss Fay Anderson, he learns you are not the great attraction, but that my own humble self is the seventy-five thousand dollar prize, eh?"

Their merry laughter came floating through the air.

"He'll fall in love with you, sure, Dell," said Fay, merrily, "for there's few men who can withstand the temptation of such a prize. Mr. Bertrand is nice, too, I think."

And then, in the next room, Harry Bertrand smiled most sarcastically, for the ventilator over the door had been left carelessly open by the chambermaid, and, consequently, he had heard all that was said.

"So Dell Gresham was the heiress, was she? Well, he was thankful for one thing, anyhow—pretty little silver-voiced Fay Anderson was just the finest girl he had come across lately."

He was thinking some such thoughts as that, when Dell Gresham's clear tones came ringing out again.

"At any rate, Fay, I'll not mislead the gentleman—you can pass off for the wealthy one, you know. I haven't the slightest objection. And I'll wager a pair of six and a quarter white Alexandre's that neither Mr. Bertrand nor Royal Emmett will pay me any attention when they learn you have all that delightful fortune."

Harry fairly hugged himself, as he heard Dell's campaign plans. He did not fail to observe the slight vein of jocund sarcasm in her tones, as though it would be such a surprise to make people think Miss Anderson was the heiress, when, after all, it was Dell's own. He was heartily glad that she had fascinated him very strangely—and then he was sensible of a jealousy toward that "Royal Emmett" he had heard mention.

So he made up his mind, then and there, to continue his acquaintance with pretty little brown-haired Fay, who was going to "play off" the heiress; then—then—his thoughts grew strangely imaginative, as he progressed far enough into his day-dreams to see bridal favors, and priests in their surplices, and a disappointed lover envying him his good luck.

With a "confound it!" and an angry toss of his half-smoked cigar into the paper-frill'd grate, Harry managed to get out of his room very quietly, for a man, and escape to the orchard, where the apple-blossoms were scattered all over the young grass.

"She's a remarkably fine girl—the handsomest foot I ever saw in my life."

And Mr. Royal Emmett nodded approvingly out of the window of Harry Bertrand's room, to where he saw Dell Gresham's white dresses fluttering among the trees.

Harry glanced warily toward the next room.

"Don't speak so loud, Emmett—the lady may be in there."

"No—for I met her on the piazza as I came in, hat and sacque on. She's down yonder with Miss Gresham, without question; although I've no objection to her hearing me compliment her."

"Certainly not," smiled Harry, "yet the compliment is rather doubtful in its good sense as regards her ears."

"I don't admit that; but, Bertrand, did you know she was worth a cool seventy thousand?" Miss Anderson, I mean."

"I believe it is so reported, although I do not think so. I hope she is poor as—"

He stopped suddenly, the hot blood surging to his very temples.

Mr. Emmett stared incredulously at Harry a moment, then laughed, almost boisterously.

"A-h! I comprehend, idiot that I have been not to see we were both contending for the same prize; I, for no other earthly reason than because I must have a rich wife, and you because you believe her poor, and are afraid to risk your chances as a fortune-hunter!"

"I know she is not the heiress, Emmett," returned Harry, quietly, "because I myself heard the ladies arrange their plan to have it appear that Fay was what Dell really is. I am glad it is so, for I love Fay Anderson for her own sweet self."

His tender, proud tones were in entire keeping with his fine face and figure as he drew himself up when he thus confessed his precious secret.

Mr. Emmett drew a long breath, and looked curiously at Harry.

"Bertrand, you'll swear to that? For, such being the case, I'll transfer my allegiance to Miss Gresham in less than two minutes."

Harry's lip curled.

"My word is as good as my oath, Emmett; but, I'd take the latter that Miss Gresham will not be supremely blessed in a lover who is as fickle as mercenary."

Emmett laughed.

"You don't know the way of the world, my dear friend. Take my advice, look out for number one—and you are welcome to Fay Anderson. Hark! I hear them coming now. *Au revoir*, old fellow. I must meet Miss Gresham on the steps and open the campaign."

But, he had not opened the door, before Fay Anderson with starry eyes and carnation cheeks, stepped lightly in.

Just as he had arrived at this sensible conclusion, a sweet strain of music floated up on the air, followed by Vida's own voice.

"Oh, Doctor Haydn, your favorite, the galop. You enjoy dancing so much, and here is an opportunity to choose your partner."

There might have been alternatives, but none presented themselves to Max.

He recklessly offered his arm to his fair hostess, and in another moment they were whirling down the room.

He saw Dick's frantic gestures for him to

be dolefully surveying, and, pointing to an unsightly gap extending along one side, exclaimed:

"A pretty object, indeed, to go to a *soiree*! Look at that, will you?" bringing his foot in such close proximity to his friend's nose that Dick thought best to lengthen the distance between them. "A beautiful foot to introduce into a lady's drawing-room, is it not?" No, Dick, go without me. Win the old doctor's favor, take whatever advantage that may give you, and, perhaps, marry Miss Vida, at last, and be happy!"

"Nonsense, Max; you're the only one with a ghost of a chance in that quarter, and no wonder. One glance at your hand—some face would win any girl's heart."

"Charity?" Then seizing the card he mechanically held in his hand, she exclaimed: "Oh, Max, I see it all now! How could you think that basket was intended for you? It was for some of papa's patients."

"But the card with my name and address upon it, Vida?"

"It is one of your own cards, and was lying on the table with the one directed to them. I must have taken yours up by mistake, and the penciled words I added afterwards. Oh, Max, what must you think of me?"

"Think of you? That you are the best and sweetest little angel in the world, and I will only have the recollection of another stupid blunder to take with me when I leave this miserable place forever!"

"Do you mean, Doctor Haydn, that you leave us after papa has withdrawn from practice in your favor? I thought that you would have valued his proffer more highly."

Max stared.

"Withdrawn from practice! You don't mean, Vida Carrington, that I am to take his place? Oh, then—"

Max paused and began to feel the difficulties of that position.

"Then you will not leave us, Doctor Haydn?" she asked, with a charming blush.

"Vida, you say upon this card?" If you have need of any thing else, I will see that you have it! I have great need of something else. I have need of you, darling, and as you are a conscientious little girl, you must keep your promise."

"But, Max, I didn't make any such promise to you."

Max silenced this sophistry after a manner of his own, and declared that his May basket would be worthless without the message that it brought.

It is not work that kills men; it is worry. Work is healthy; you can hardly put more upon a man than he can bear. Worry is rust upon the blade. It is not the revolution that destroys the machinery, but the friction. Fear secretes acids, but love and trust are sweet juices.

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Fear secretes acids, but love and trust are

sweet juices.

It is not work that kills men; it is worry.

Work is healthy; you can hardly put more

upon a man than he can bear. Worry is rust

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"Ha! then you did fail?" and blotted.
"No, I did not fail!" fiercely; and he continued: "I tell you I was balked. My knife was sharp; my arm was steady; my nerves were well braced; I had sworn to do the deed—then how could I fail? I was by his bedside; I was about to strike at his heart, when something struck me from behind, somebody pounced upon me; and more—they carried me down before I could fight. A pistol pressed my cheek; I tried to shake off my enemy, and—bah! what use in all this? The young man lives. I am lucky in keeping my own life!"

"How unfortunate!"

"Ten thousand blasphemies! yes. I was tricked dirty!"

"And how happened this interfered in your plans, so opportunely on the scene? Who was it? Do you know him?"

"Ay, Satan take him! well do I know him!"

"Who was it?"

"Mr. Joseph Fleet, of the Secret Service force of London, is in the parlor, and would see my lord without delay," at this juncture announced a servant, ere the bull-fighter could answer the nobleman's inquiry.

"*Cospita!*" exclaimed Diego; "the very man! It was he! He it was who foiled me!" and he glared upon the servant in a savage way, evidently astonished at hearing that the detective was in the house.

The reader will remember that, when Joe Fleet discovered Diego Perez operating on the lock of the door, he drew back into the space of another doorway near him, and pulled off his boots. They had served him now admirably. One boot, swung with unerring aim, struck the Spaniard on the temple; and, in a trice, the detective was astride of Diego. He pinioned him firmly down, placed a pistol against his shaggy head, and chuckled over the capture.

The noise aroused Victor Hassan; and, as the young man started from his couch, two doors on opposite sides of the room, opened, through which appeared Calvert Herndon and Simon Jeremiah Ebenezer Kraak, both considerably alarmed.

"Mr. Fleet, what on earth is this? What has happened? How came you here? Who is that man?"

"Well," answered the detective, coolly, "I came here on business. This rascal came to stick you with a knife. That's all. See it?—the knife. There it is on the floor yonder; then to his capture: 'But, you didn't do it—eh? You dog! I say you didn't do it. My name is Fleet—Joe Fleet. You know me? Have you ever heard of me? You devil! Thank me for this. I just came in time, didn't I? What do you think of yourself? You scoundrel!" poking Diego in the ribs, which called forth a deep groan, another onth, a snap of the massive jaws as they closed in a smothered impression.

The bull-fighter was taken at a weak point. With all his strength, with all his audacity, he was overpowered and powerless. His limbs and body were securely held, as if padlocked to the floor by a man whose physical endurance and elasticity of frame were adequate to conquer his ugly antagonist.

"There! There! See now!" cried the ex-superintendent; "I told you so! Didn't I say we'd have a hard time? Didn't my dream-book say that, to dream of cards and the devil, meant trouble? Here it is! It's come! I knew it! Wait, I'll find it in my book and read it to you."

But the others paid him little heed. Their attention was directed to the bull-fighter and the detective.

"Let me up!" howled Diego, dismally, choking back the consuming chagrin and anger which teemed in his breast; "I am foiled in this—curse your coming! Then why keep me down here? Let me up; or, by his Holiness the Pope! I'll burst a vein at blaspheming!" but he writhed in vain as he tried to release himself from that iron grip.

"Easy, now," admonished the detective. "You see this pistol is loaded and cocked; so that, if you disturb the trigger, it will be apt to result in a promiscuous scaterring of your brains. Now, will you live or die? You can choose." Then, compressing his lips firmly: "Hark ye! I'll not be trifled with. Say so by action, and you can quit this world in a twinkling."

"Bah! the world is a h—l. Yet, here, I am master of myself and many others. If I die—though my lot be a heaven, it would be a servile one. Wisely, I choose the world; for, in it, I have a certain reign. Otherwise, I would become a slave. I must live. With me, life is power, though in a mortal h—l. Let me up from this!"

"That'll do for you. I know you, Diego Perez—know you for a thief and a ruffian, and well deserving of the halter. Now, if I let you up, will you behave yourself and go with me?"

"Yes."

"First: who sent you here?"

"It is no business of yours."

"Tell me," continued Fleet, sternly, pressing the weapon closer against Diego's head.

"Lord Hallison Blair!" blurted the Spaniard, after a moment's hesitation.

"Good! That's what I thought. Now you may get up," saying which, he released Diego, and the latter scampered to his feet.

Ostensibly, the bull-fighter meant to keep his word, to accompany Joe Fleet. But, the detective was blinded here.

No sooner was Diego Perez free than, stretching his limbs, twirling his arms, uttering a defiant snarl, he dashed toward a window opposite to where he stood.

Fleet endeavored to intercept him, but, failing in this, he fired the pistol—to no effect, as he judged; for, without reckoning upon the consequences, Diego sprang through the frame. There was a crash, a jingle of glass, and he disappeared.

Simultaneously they ran to the window and looked out. The darkness of the night obscured every thing.

"Devil catch him!" muttered Joe Fleet, "he's escaped me after all, but he's my bird yet. I know his roost."

"What is the solution of this occurrence, Mr. Fleet?" interrogated Calvert Herndon, as he and the others turned to the detective for an explanation.

"That man is Diego Perez—once a Spanish bull-fighter, now a London rough, and a tool of Lord Blair's. He came here to kill you, young man (to Victor), but I prevented the catastrophe, as you see. It's all right, sir, I've seen her—your lady-love; that is, Lady Blair, I mean. All the same. Whole thing fixed shortly. Have yourself ready to come to me when I send for you. I don't know exactly when or where it will be. Be on the watch against assassins."

"You have seen Lady Blair?" interrupted Victor, anxious to hear of Pauline.

"Oh, yes. She's all right—perfectly

well, I mean. Remember, and be on your guard. More anon. Hem! Good-by, all."

Having drawn on his boots while speaking, he hurried from the room, from the hotel, along the street, turning, foot-hot, back toward square St. James, leaving the trail to marvel over the occurrence which had very near cost Victor his life.

When Diego Perez launched himself out into the air from the window of Victor Hassan's room, he fully expected to be man-gled in the fall. But, he was desperate, and with him desperation smothered fear; he cared not, as long as he would by the lofty jump escape the detective and the prison-cell, which had loomed in his vision.

Instead of striking, after a violent descent, upon stone, brick or dirt, and being crushed, he suddenly alighted upon the roof of a dwelling without so much as spraining an ankle.

Looking about him, he soon found a trap-door, and he made his way through this to the interior of the building. The house was unoccupied. He continued down the stairs, chambered out at a side window, and entered the street. He was bare-headed—was without his cloak—but he, too, started in the direction of square St. James, in a state of mind difficult to describe.

He reached the nobleman's house in advance of Joe Fleet; and now, upon hearing the detective announced, his wild rage cooled; he could not decide whether Fleet was in hound-like pursuit of him, or whether he had really come there on business with Lord Hallison Blair.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE INTERVIEW.

MOTIONING Diego to be quiet, Lord Hallison Blair turned to the man who waited at the door, and said, calmly:

"Show the visitor to my fencing-room. And mark—do not make any great haste about it. Delay a few minutes."

"Yes, my lord," and, as the servant withdrew, the nobleman continued, addressing the others:

"Both of you will come with me. You, Diego Perez, must secrete yourself, and, at the clapping of my hands, be ready to—"

"Well," prompted the Spaniard, "and think you I am dumb—that I know not your meaning? I must be ready, at your say, and then to his capture: 'But, you didn't do it—eh? You dog! I say you didn't do it. My name is Fleet—Joe Fleet. You know me? Have you ever heard of me? You devil! Thank me for this. I just came in time, didn't I? What do you think of yourself? You scoundrel!" poking Diego in the ribs, which called forth a deep groan, another onth, a snap of the massive jaws as they closed in a smothered impression.

"No, Diego—not that. Simply knock him down—insensible—that's all. If your blow is hard enough to kill, why, we'll have to be satisfied. I will look to the rest," and the significant fire in his eyes was answered by a knowing leer on the part of the bull-fighter. "But, come," added Blair, "there is no time to lose, if we would reach the fencing-room before this rash comer. I fear a dangerous secret has leaked out. Maybe the detective has discovered something to injure us. Come."

The recumbent form of Madge Marks had all along, escaped Diego's notice, and, as he followed after the two plotters, his eyes were ablaze, his only thought was of the opportunity about to present, in which he could turn the tables on the detective.

Madge was, therefore, left to herself, and, for the time, forgotten. Her drunken sleep was not destined to be of long duration; her action, upon awakening, was to be of considerable importance in the pending scenes of the night.

"Do you entertain any idea that we have been discovered, Lord Hallison?" inquired the physician, in a tremulous whisper, as they descended the stairs to the floor below.

"Discovered? Pshaw! what grounds could I have for any such imagination? Why, you are already turning white. You must do better than this, Gulick Brandt. If you pale and tremble when there is no cause, how will it be when you are arrested for placing the pastille beneath Calvert Herndon's nose? Beware! I advise you for your own welfare, when I say, guard your expression of face even closer than the words of your mouth; or, as sure as death, you'll bring destruction on yourself. Well, what now? Where are you going, sirrah?" the latter interrogatory speech to a serving-man who was ascending to the floor they had just left.

"I—I want to get something, my lord; if you please, I—"

"But your place is in the hall. You have no business up here."

"If you please, your lordship, Jeems dropped his kerchief when he's comin' back from a-tellin' you of the visitor down stairs, an' he asked me to get it for 'im, sir, my lord—that's it," bowing low before his exacting master.

"Partly. He told me—But, never mind, I know all about it. I always get at such things in the nick of time. The Spaniard was to receive one hundred pounds for his little job—and I have gleaned a variety of other particulars from different sources. Come, come up. More—tell me why you wanted Victor Hassan murdered?"

"There—there must be some great mistake. I do not, at all, understand this rascal," stammered the nobleman, but it was in well-affected surprise.

"Did he tell you?" sputtered Brandt, in a broken, hesitating way; for which utterance, Blair could have throttled him, and at which Fleet smiled, as he answered:

"Partly. He told me—But, never mind, I know all about it. I always get at such things in the nick of time. The Spaniard was to receive one hundred pounds for his little job—and I have gleaned a variety of other particulars from different sources. Come, come up. More—tell me why you wanted Victor Hassan murdered?"

"Now, look here," reasoned the detective, argumentatively and emphatically; "I have eyes, and I have ears. I have seen, and I have heard. Seeing and hearing is believing, and consequently you can't blink me by tomfoolery. As long as you won't answer my questions straightforwardly, as long as you won't give me any satisfaction, I'll create a focus by stating why I am here. I, Joe Fleet, legally authorized deputy of justice in the Secret Service force of London—thanks to the favor of his majesty—do pronounce you under arrest for having bribed one Diego Perez to murder, in cold blood, a young man, whose name is Victor Hassan, who is the rightful claimant to the title and estates of the late Lord Harold, earl of —. Further, for having attempted this young man's life on a former occasion, in America. More, for having buried alive one Calvert Herndon, with the assistance of your associate rascal there, Doctor Gulick Brandt. More yet, on suspicion of having persuaded into wedlock, through misrepresentation and fraud, the daughter of said Calvert Herndon. And, to wind the matter up, add my opinion of you, which is, that you are a villain at large, a gamester, a trickster, a man who can espouse, first, the Tory party, then the Whig, then the Tory again, and kill conscience in the furtherance of every dirty triumph. Plain talk, isn't it? Makes you wince, doesn't it? Joe Fleet, I am! So, come along. Business, this is," arising and pointing toward the door.

"Near the door was an iron plate—such an one as is in use in our shooting-galleries—at which to discharge a pistol, in practicing—and behind this the bull-fighter secreted himself, check-reining his eagerness to deal a foul blow at the one who had so successfully thwarted him at the — Hotel.

Joseph Fleet was soon ushered into their presence, and he entered, saluting them politely, which salutation was stiffly acknowledged by the Englishman. Brandt neither bowed nor spoke—he was beginning to tremble; for, with the first glance into the detective's eyes, he fancied he saw there

something threatening, and he remained silent, dreading he knew not what, almost ready to cry out in despair, as he imagined Fleet had discovered their villainy, and had come to arrest them.

"Take a seat, sir!" Blair said. "You have important business with me, I presume; that you should call at this hour—it is growing late."

"Yes—business. Were you going to bed? Sorry," was the detective's indifferent reply, as he dropped into a chair.

"Be kind enough to state your business at once, then," pursued the nobleman.

"In a hurry? Oh—well—" Joe Fleet laid the forefinger of his right hand on the palm of his left, as if about to explain a problem:

"You see, fact is, Lord Blair, business is business at all hours—either day or night. Makes no difference to me, if you'd been in bed; you would have got up, of course. Sorry—I am—to intrude, but there's something I want to know—something that you alone can tell me—and something I am determined to get at. Understand? I say determined. I am an emissary of the law—a spy, an explorer at large, in the secret service, and so forth. See?"

"Pray you, proceed."

"I will. Isn't often that my calling brings me in contact with any of the nobility. In fact, I've never had a case among any of the noblemen of England since I received my commission—not missing that the characters of some don't need investigation. But, as I said before, business is business—and on business I've come here, to see you, and that man, there—Brandt, I believe his name is," and, as he turned from one to the other of his hearers, fixing that steady, sharp, analytical gaze on each, alternately, the physician's nervousness increased, though he strove to conceal it.

After a momentary pause, he went on:

"The question I shall propound must be answered promptly, satisfactorily, or I shall be obliged to resort to more persuasive measures than mere polite inquiry. Understand? It is this: Why did you wish Lord Victor Hassan Blair removed from this world to the next, eh? Why did you bargain with a base-born assassin, named Diego Perez, to murder him, eh? What is your excuse for it? Now, don't tell me it was because you feared he would claim and get, by right of lawful heritage, the position you usurp; for I know that already. But, tell me what other motive you had. See? I'm sharp as a sword-fish, keen as the back of a dolphin, on which nobody could ride without a saddle, poets' assertions to the contrary, notwithstanding. What did you want young Hassan killed for?"

Blair started and paled; Brandt trembled; Diego, in his concealment, grew red with pent-up rage.

"Answer me, Lord Hallison Blair," closely pursued the detective, as he saw that the Englishman hesitated; why did you bribe a ruffian to kill Lord Victor Hassan Blair, the true son, and only surviving relative of Lord Harold, Earl of — whose position you disgrace? Queer that I know so much, isn't it?"

Lord Victor Hassan Blair! The "B" did not, then, signify Blair? Victor had discovered his claim to the title!

The words of Joe Fleet rung in the nobleman's ears, sunk like fire into his brain.

He must have acquainted him with the attempt made upon his life in America!

What was pending? A crisis, a denouement, in which he, Blair, would become prey to an avenging law!

The above flashed across the Englishman's mind, and while the pallor on his handsome face assumed a whiter hue, he, too, with all his reckless nature, indifference to every situation, boasted promptness to deal with any emergency, grew ill at ease under this plain speech, which indicated that the speaker was thoroughly familiar with the matter in hand.

Gulick Brandt could scarce smother the groan which arose to his lips. The atmosphere seemed, to him, to be growing chilly, disagreeable; a creeping sensation came over him.

"I do not understand you, sir. What is the meaning of this enigmatical strain?" Blair mustered strength to say and ask.

"Oh, you can't comprehend? Listen. Now, I know exactly what I'm about. Just come from the hotel, from the young man on whom your hired ruffian was about to practice his knife tricks. I happened to be there in time to prevent a murder. See? I had captured the assassin—rascal—had him and he got away."

"Did he tell you?" sputtered Brandt, in a broken, hesitating way; for which utterance, Blair could have throttled him, and at which Fleet smiled, as he answered:

"Partly. He told me—But, never mind, I know all about it. I always get at such things in the nick of time. The Spaniard was to receive one hundred pounds for his little job—and I have gleaned a variety of other particulars from different sources. Come, come up. More—tell me why you wanted Victor Hassan murdered?"

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loudly and savagely, while its eyeballs glared fiercely.

"Go away, fool!" said Steve, contemptuously, "I am a man without a cross, and your Indian jugglery will have no avail with me."

But the bear took no notice of this objuration, save by growling and sliding into the hut, where, gaining the extreme end, it sat bolt upright on its hind legs, erect, like a man.

Steve continued smoking his pipe.

"Jist drop that 'ere blanket afore the entrance," said a voice, in startling proximity to him.

But, Steve was never found napping. He neither started nor looked round, nor evinced any hurry. Slowly rising, he yawned, looked round the camp, saw that even the guard had joined the revelers, and dropped the blanket before his wigwam, thereby indicating that he meant to seek repose in slumber. None were likely at that hour to disturb him.

As soon as this had been satisfactorily carried out, he turned and saw that the grim head of the bear had been removed, revealing the most hideously painted Indian face he had yet seen.

"What seeks the Shawnee in the wigwam of the pale-face prisoner?" said Steve coldly.

"Tarnation snakes!" cried the other, with a capacious grin that revealed every tooth in his head, "don't you know me?"

"Tom Smith!"

Steve!

And the two rangers shook hands heartily. Suddenly Steve seemed struck by some memory. He looked keenly into the youth's face, and read nothing there but hopeful good humor, as he produced a bottle of rum, a pile of cold venison steaks, some hominy cakes, and other rude eatables.

"Just use your chops," said Tom, quietly. "I'm hungry, sin I bin on the watch two hours."

Determined to leave explanations until after supper, the hungry scout fell to, and, aided by his comrade, soon demolished a meal that, in civilized society, might have satisfied a dozen men and more. Steve ate and drank with deliberation, all the while thinking deeply on the unaccountable composure of Tom, which he could only account for by supposing him utterly bereft of his wits.

Having picked every bone clean, polished the platter, and drank a pint of rum and water, Steve slowly filled up a second horn and proceeded to light his pipe.

All the while his glances were directed uneasily toward poor Tom Smith, who sat quite unconscious of any unusual demonstration of feeling on the part of his beloved tutor and master.

"Tom!" cried Steve, suddenly, "do you know how I kin to be shut up year?"

"Well, replied Tom, scratching his head, "them lying thieves of copperheads du say that 'tis caz they cort you a jist taking yer knife out of the heart of a gal."

"You know it ain't true."

"Lord bless yer, Steve! in course I know it ain't, and more—it are only an excuse of them Shawnees to make yer join their tribe, seein' they guess you shute pretty well."

"Does yer know, Tom, who the gal is?"

"Well, I karn't exactly say as I does, but I know she's white."

"Did not you and Martha get took together?" continued Steve, believing the other had half lost his wits.

"Yes, sure."

"And didn't you like her a bit?"

"Thunder! Yes."

"Well, thin you take it mighty kule," added Steve, the scout becoming slightly annoyed.

"Takes what kule?" asked Tom.

"Why, all about Martha—"

"Well, I blomed," continued Tom, "if one on us two ain't a durned fule, for I can't make out a word you means."

"Have you not heard what the Injines chuse me with?"

"'Yes—killing a young woman?"

"But, what young ooman?"

"I don't know, I said."

"Tom Smith, they accuse me of killin', with my knife, your Martha!" and the scout's eyes were fixed on the ground with deep and almost uncontrollable emotion.

He dared not look up, so pained was he at the very idea of his young friend's sufferings.

"Does they?" said Tom, coolly; "then they must be pretty particularly blind."

"But," cried Steve, "I saw her myself, with the knife stickin' in her heart."

"Martha, my dear!" whispered Tom, through a chink in the wigwam, "come in an' show yourself, as Steve here will have it you're dead."

The blanket was moved gently aside, and a fine-made Indian girl stood before Steve, in whose blushing face, despite the paint, the scout at once recognized the daughter of Judge Mason's laborer.

"My—sakes!" said the runner.

Tom was about to enter into an explanation, when the girl glided away, with her finger on her lips, and in a couple of minutes two stalwart warriors entered the tent and bade the captive follow them.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE DEATH SENTENCE.

The night was now brilliantly clear, the stars shining with an excess of luster, which seemed to annoy the Indians, as they stood still a moment, irresolute. One of them pointed to a party of red-skins dancing round a fire, with flashing knives and bright tomahawks.

"Come, kill a pale-face," said one of the Shawnees, in deep, guttural tones. "Long-knife much talk—red-skin silent?" Then entering into the shadow of the hill, they crept round the projecting corner, opened a door, pointed to it, and Steve, having entered, they closed it, leaving him in total darkness.

For a moment Steve was stunned by the suddenness of the change, no less than with the enigmatical character of the murder of which he was accused. Next he proceeded to search the apartment, and finding a bed of skins and boughs, he lay down to rest; when, despite the halloos of the drunken savages, he soon fell into a deep slumber, from which he was only aroused by the streaming of a warm ray of sunshine through a chink in the cavern.

Steve sat up, looked about him, and then shaking himself, he was about to lie down again, for want of something better to do, when his ears were attracted by a chorus of sweet sounds—the voices of white women in anxious debate.

Looking around, he at once discovered that these sounds came through the same chink that admitted the sun; and in another

moment he was committing the indiscretion of looking through into their quarters.

His eyes fell upon a kind of half cavern, large enough to shelter twenty or thirty persons, but protected only above and on three sides, the other being the yawning entrance, opening on the plain. In front, about five paces from the cavern, was a strong stockade, through which he could plainly see the red-skins moving about the camp as gravely and unconcernedly as if nothing had occurred on the previous night.

Within the guard was the stockade were Ella, Etie, Matata, Martha, and the young Huron girl, engaged in the very unsentimental occupation of eating. All were, however, grave and thoughtful.

It appeared as if Martha had but recently arrived, and had been recording the events of the previous night.

Ella was as unconcerned as usual, her roses having fully returned, though her mind was as vacant as ever. Etie was pale, wan, and thin, with anxiety and fear. Every moment she dreaded some awful fate, worse even than the calamity that had stricken her sister.

Matata was thoughtful, and her sister, as became her age, was a silent listener.

"But what will they do with him in the end?" asked Etie hurriedly. "I can not bear this horrid life."

"Unless some aid comes soon," said Martha, in a low tone, "Steve must do as Tom has done, turn Indian or die."

"Turn Indian?" murmured Etie.

"Do not blame him," continued Martha, with a faint and transient blush; "he would have been as brave and determined as any of the Avengers, but he was alone."

"True," said Etie.

"And who knows?" added Martha, "how useful he may yet prove in the many trials we may have to go through?"

"Sister—young—old—head—speak like missionary book," put in Matata, approvingly.

"What is he accused of?" asked Etie.

"He is accused of murdering a young girl in cold blood," replied Martha.

"Kenewa's brother!" said Prairie Rose.

"It is not true!" exclaimed Etie.

"True?" said Martha; "certainly not. But he is a white man and a great warrior, and unless something is done he will die. This is a trifle, this accusation of murder. 'Tis the owner of Never-miss they will kill if they discover his identity."

"Gals," whispered a voice, "list!—gals! Don't be frightened; it's only Steve."

For an instant there was a considerable amount of alarm on the part of the prisoners, though Prairie Rose never moved a muscle, merely glancing warily over the plain to watch the Indians, who at any moment might interrupt their converse.

"Where are you?" faltered Etie.

"Close here—come to this chink."

Etie, Martha, and Matata obeyed the latter leaving the young Indian girl to watch the Shawnees. A conversation ensued relative to the position of the whole party, the results of which will be better seen in the course of our narrative. It may be remarked, however, that each spoke according to her own individual character and position. Etie was calm and resigned, but without hope; Martha had no fear of the consequences; Matata trusted wholly in her brave warrior.

The feelings of Steve may be best judged from his own words as he bade them all farewell.

"And now God bless you all!" he said.

"What is to be must be, and nobody can't mend it. If it please the Lord that these thieving savages are to have my scalp, let 'em—I can only die once; but if it shall please the Lord to give me a chance of life, why, I'll take it! And now let the vagabonds come on as soon as they like; they'll find me a man without a cross, and no finer."

And with these words he moved back within his cave, and sat down to wait the course of events.

Soon the door opened, and several Indian warriors appeared, ready to lead him forth.

Steve walked quietly in their midst, took a lump of meat and a gourd of water which were offered him, and munching his frugal breakfast walked to where the Shawnee chiefs awaited him.

The head men of the tribe, a dozen in number, were seated on logs round a large fire, the seat of honor being occupied by an aged warrior, whose prowess in battle, whose vast renown through every tribe of that kind of right to preside on all occasions.

The captive was shown another log, upon which he seated himself, with a not ungraceful bow, and waited.

"My pale-face brother is very welcome," said Theanderoigo, in a calm tone of voice; "what brings him to the wigwams of the Shawnees, so far from the hunting-grounds of the long-knives?"

"Well, Shawnee," replied Steve, quietly, "if yer expects any lies from me, you are very much mistaken. I'm up hill and down dale straightforward—so here goes. Have you not some white gals here as don't belong to yer?"

"There are maidens in our custody," continued the Indian, "but they were left with us by those who owned them."

"A darned circumstantial lie, chief!"

Then chaps as brought 'em here never owned them. They stole 'em—the mean, wall-eyed skunks!—and, so being, I came after 'em—to see if as how I kudn't get 'em back."

"My pale-face brother was not alone?"

"Well, not exactly—but I left my friends some distance back," continued Steve.

"Did the long-knife, who owns Never-miss, think to creep into our camp and carry off the maiden on his back?"

"No, Indian; but what's the use of all this circumlocution and bother? I'm your prisoner—a white man without a cross—do you worst!"

"Die!" said the aged chief, waving his tomahawk.

"Die!" roared the multitude.

"Die!" said Rattlesnake, furiously, who, with wild and ferocious mien, had been drinking in every word of the speaker. As the last words were uttered, a deadly look of malice settled on his countenance.

As Black Hawk concluded his speech, Rattlesnake leaped to his feet with a demoniac yell, whirled his little glittering ax over his head, and darted it at the prisoner.

A gleam of light passed through the air, and the scout felt one of his cords cut, while he was unbound. But not a glance told of any emotion; the white man stood erect, and dead and steady as a marble statue.

(To be continued—Continued in No. 59.)

red, neither a beast nor a fish. Let him lay his hand upon his heart and say, 'I am all red—I am a Shawnee.' My people are ready to adopt him; a wigwam can be found, and then, when his people have been given into our hands, we will hail him as a great chief; the fawn-eyed girls shall crowd around him, and he shall know himself a great and mighty warrior."

"You want me, Black Hawk," said Steve, quietly, "to forsake the Hurons, to turn Shawnee, and, assuming Shawnee nature, lead my people into a trap, which shall give my new brothers much ammunition, many weapons, and scalps to boast."

"My brother is a great chief—he heart is surely red—he can not be white."

"Shawnee," cried Steve, "there you are wrong. I say it, though it should be no boast on the part of a white, I am a man without a cross; I am white in blood, white in nature, and white in feelings, and I scorn your offer. My life is in your hands—take it. I have nothing else to give you, for the soul you would rob me of is God's!"

A dark frown lowered on every brow, a murmur of disappointment and rage succeeded—for these men, knowing the fearful reputation of Steve, and aware that he had lived years with the Hurons, were not without the hope of adopting so mighty a warrior into their tribe.

"Turn Indian!" cried Steve. "There you are wrong. I say it, though it should be no boast on the part of a white, I am a man without a cross; I am white in blood, white in nature, and white in feelings, and I scorn your offer. My life is in your hands—take it. I have nothing else to give you, for the soul you would rob me of is God's!"

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"Shawnee,"

"B'ARSKIN MAT"*A "Camp-Fire Yarn" done up into Rhyme.*

BY JOS. F. MORAN.

Wal, boyees, my name's Mat Pringle, ur "B'ar skin Mat."

I had from old Kentuck--s'pose ye've all guessed that.

Leastwise 'twas easy 'nough for yer to larn,

For I war knockin' 'round that old State half of me life,

With nary comrade 'cept this here gun an' knife--

Yeou say yer'd like to hear me spin a yarn?

Wal--s'pose I may as well--seem' as how it is *yeou*,

Wal, down an' tell yer a little thin', ur two,

To kinder occerpy our lisur' time,

So shuy that ar' canter round to 'ard this way, *boss*,

An' let's 'b'le an' n'p--that's all right, old *boss*—

By Jum! I tell yer, boyees, that licker's prime!

Oh, how I c'm to be call'd old "B'ar skin Mat!"

Wal no, "twon't be very long to tell yer that

Yeou see as how it happened in this *herewise*:

Sum years ago while scoun' 'round in old Kentuck—

To cum across a *nuther* huntin'-party 'twar my luck—

"Twins Nat Long, Pete Wilkins an' sum more uv the boys.

I know'd in a minnit as how that war sumthin' wrong,

So I steps rite up to my old "rite bower," Nat Long,

An' sez, "Hello, Nat, old boy, war's up now?"

Yer face is as long as yer gun-barrel, an' looks just as cross—

Wal in thunder is in the wind now, oh, old *boss*?

Can tell us w'at in blazes is the row?

"Wal," sez he, "yer see as how me and t'other boyees here, we got all out or grub an' wus on the look-out fur deer,

Uv any thin' else w'at might be good to eat—

But 'bout three hours ago ur more inst'd uv a deer

We stuck the trail uv a grizzly an' 'oller'd it up to here—

But they won't budge another fut ar—*I'm beat!*"

"Nat," sez I, "I'm in want uv sum 'lement jest now."

An' ain't got nothin' w'at's very particler to do, nowhow—

So I see you stick by the boyees here for a while,

An' I'll just toller this chaps myself, an' yeou kin be as how I'll make his darn ugly, stiff old canes' su'et

Afore I've been in his tracks fur more'n a mile!"

Now, boyees, Nat ain't no coward yeou kin jest be that,

If he did rayther stick to the boyees than toller that ar' b'ar—

So I just kinder "jumped in his boots" an' piked off—

Uv course th' t'other fellers lar'd and jeer'd but I know'd my biz,

An' as I hed a fresh trail to track an' my blood wuz risin'—

I short I wuz good fur more'n one scuff!

An' I call yer the way I lit out w'ar a caisher to sunshie!

Then yeou'd ought to see that grizzly cum fur me!

Wal, boyees, that's no use uv me tellin' yer all 'bout that ar' fightin'—

But when I got to the end uv—I guess 'bout a mile,

Then the evn critter on a log all in a pile,

An' he jest lookin' at me comin', I s'w!

It kinder *tetch* me to see him takin' uv things so cool—

So I leet up ar' put a hole rite into the darn fool!

Then yeou'd ought to see that grizzly cum fur me!

Wal, boyees, that's no use uv me tellin' yer all 'bout that ar' fightin'—

But yeou bet I thort I'd never live to see much more daylight!

But, by Jum! I'm all here yet as yer kin see!

Yes, arter a good deal uv huggin' an' scratchin' I found his heart,

Then took my knife an' peeld off his hide purty rit'e—

Just to show the boys that I hed got my game;

When they see'd me comin' with that skin how they did yell!

An' that's 'bout all uv that yarn w'at I've got fur to tell.

Capt--ever sence—"B'ar skin Mat" has be'n my name!

United by a Foe.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

SOME half a mile from the little valley in which nestled a picturesque building of sunburnt adobes, stood a young woman. Her hair, her face, her eyes, all might have caused a casual observer to think her a *Jatapena*—one of those women whose marvellous beauty of face and form have rendered the valley of Jalapa celebrated throughout that land so famed for lovely females.

But though well worthy of being classed with them, Virginia Benham was an American—native of the sunny South. Her dress, her coiffure were American in style. Just then there was a look of deep anxiety upon her face as she crouched behind the fallen tree-top upon the little knoll. There was a burning glow in the eyes that gazed so intently along the valley.

A picturesque sight was there. A troop of near two-score horsemen were riding slowly along, their fiery chargers fretting proudly against the unwanted restraint of a tightly-drawn rein. The dress betrayed their nationality.

The slashed and embroidered, gold-spangled and silver-buttoned *culigones*, the snowy-white lawn beneath, the broad-brimmed, gold-banded sombrero, the long lances, fluttering *peones* of gaudy colors, the clumsy *esquites*; all proclaimed them Mexican *laneros*.

At their head rode one whom Virginia Benham well knew. He was one whom hitherto she had merely despised. Now she saw she had more cause to fear him.

Had sworn revenge when she rejected his suit. A cold thrill pervaded her frame as she thought that perhaps this was the cause of his being here, so near to her home, as well as the American forces at Jalapa. He had men enough to overcome all opposition that could be offered by the inmates of the hacienda. There seemed nothing to prevent him from running riot as his mad passions impelled him.

Virginia stealthily crept along the hill-side, keeping the guerrillas in view, while taking care to remain unobserved herself, and in a few minutes saw that her worst fears were realized.

The hacienda was sighted, Roger Hensley sounded the "andela" and the band dashed ahead at a swift pace. The great gates were entered, and several of the *peones* shot down, or else impaled upon the long lances. A scene of terrible confusion followed.

Virginia suddenly started. The form of a milk-white mustang grazing further up the valley met her gaze. A glow of hope and strong resolve lighted up her features through the ghastly pallor that had pervaded them.

She would mount and fly for assistance. If too late to save, she could yet avenge. The spoiler should not live long to boast over his exploit.

It was not far to the city. Queen could cover the three miles in a quarter of an hour, rough as were the roads. Perhaps it would not be too late.

The maiden glided swiftly toward the grazing mustang, and called it by name. The intelligent creature greeted her mistress with a whinper of delight. But Virginia could not stop to return the caress. A minute lost now might prove fatal.

She sprung upon the mare's back, and urged it forward. She had ridden thus be-

fore, for sport; surely she could now that the lives of those so dear were dependent upon her exertions.

A word—a pat upon the neck, or gentle swaying of the lithe body, told the mustang her route, and the faithful creature sped along the rocky road as though with winged feet. And yet it seemed an age ere Virginia heard the challenge of the American outpost.

A glad cry broke from her lips, not unmixed with surprise, as she recognized an officer standing near the sentinel. The recognition was mutual.

"My God! Miss—Virginia, what does this mean? Has any thing—?"

"Yes—yes; take me to the General, quick! It is life and death! Oh, hasten!"

She gasped, breathless, and almost fainting.

"This way—follow me. Tell me as we go—what is the matter?"

"A band of guerrillas—Hensley—they are at our house—murdering! Oh! my God! hasten—hasten!"

"How many? Did you notice?"

"Forty. I counted them. Can you help me? I know no one else to ask. I would not trouble you, but—"

"I will help you. It is a pleasure, not a trouble, to assist you. But here is the place," and the officer assisted Virginia to alight, and led the way into the house.

A strong, hearty voice replied to his knock, bidding them enter. And then they stood before General Scott.

"Captain Freeman?"

"Yes. General. Excuse my want of ceremony; it is a matter of life and death. There is a squad of guerrillas who have attacked this lady's house, and she has fled hither for assistance. May I lead my company to the rescue?" hurriedly uttered the soldier.

"For love of God! General, do not refuse!" murmured Virginia, almost fainting.

"It is my father—my mother!"

"You know this lady, captain? You know Hinman was led into an ambush and killed on a pretext like this."

"I will answer for her truth with my life, my honor, sir."

"Enough. Go and get your men ready; I will question her meanwhile."

The great General had only time for a few pointed queries ere Freeman returned and reported all in readiness.

"Very well. You can go. This lady will remain here while you do what you can."

"No—no, I must go, too! I must know the worst! I should die here in suspense."

The mere act of recalling the event I am about to relate causes a quickened pulsation, and, although years have elapsed since that night, yet the scene rises as vividly before my eyes as though it had been but yesterday.

Early one morning I had, while hunting in the mountains of eastern Kentucky, shot and wounded a fine, large buck, which, though bleeding freely, had broke away with long, steady leaps, down the slope of the ridge upon which I had stalked him.

Here, amid the mountains, in the deep recesses of the forest, these two men were to perish for real or fancied crimes—as likely to be the one as the other.

At once the silence was broken.

"Let this man's accusers stand forth,"

among the dead. He had met a too merciful fate by the sword of Henry Freeman.

Then the latter sought Virginia. She was willingly led aside, and the two soon came to an agreeable understanding.

They had long been lovers, though not formally engaged. Freeman had received a note, purporting to come from her hand, announcing her marriage, and requesting that he would forget her existence, or that they had ever been acquainted.

Roger Hensley had forged the note and then he told Virginia almost the same falsehoods about Freeman trusting to win her for himself. His fabrications had failed in this respect, however, and joining a body of guerrillas, he had sought to take by force what had been denied his pleadings.

In doing so, he had met his death, and unconsciously brought the estranged lovers together again. Truly they had been united by a foe.

Mr. Benham and his family proceeded with Captain Freeman at once to Jalapa, where they remained until after the triumphal entry of General Scott into Mexico, and the restoration of peace, when they returned to the States. Not long afterward, Henry Freeman claimed the fulfillment of the promise made by Virginia Benham during the ride to Jalapa, and they were married at the dead old plantation where they had first met.

For a few moments I remained utterly amazed at so unusual a scene, but, as my eyes became accustomed to the glare, and I more carefully noted the position of all parties, the solution suddenly flashed upon my mind.

Upon the further side of the circle, seated upon a fallen log, I beheld a man whose pinioned arms, together with a rope around his neck, declared him to be a prisoner, while, at his feet, groveling upon the earth, in abject terror, was another individual, who, it was plain to see, was in the same position as the first.

The one upon the log was calm—evidently the calmness of despair—though, bearded a face deadly pale, he evinced no signs of fear.

An execution—and by Lynch Law! That was the reason of this midnight assemblage.

Here, amid the mountains, in the deep recesses of the forest, these two men were to perish for real or fancied crimes—as likely to be the one as the other.

At once the silence was broken.

"Let this man's accusers stand forth,"

said a harsh, stern voice, and instantly two men stepped out from the circle.

"I accuse him of having broken the oath of our league, by attempting to betray two of our members into the hands of the officers," said one.

"And I witness the truth of the charge," said the second.

"Let the prisoner stand up," again spoke the man, who was evidently the leader.

The prisoner upon the log rose to his feet, and, with a defiant air, strode into the open space.

"I do not deny the charge," he said; "even if I did, it would be useless. I did give to give those two men over, but it was because they had wronged me, and I had sworn revenge. I did not seek to betray the league. I could have done so, had I wished. Now, do your work—and do it quickly."

And the fearless, or desperate, man drew his powerful figure to its fullest height, and glanced round the circle of stern faces.

Without speaking, half a dozen men seized the condemned wretch, and, dragging him beneath a projecting limb, threw the rope over it, and, in an instant, he was swinging between heaven and earth.

When all struggling had ceased, the body was lowered, dragged on one side, and again the silent circle was formed as before.

But the other prisoner was made of different stuff.

When commanded to step forth, that he might answer to the same charge, or, at least, of being accessory to the crime, he set up a howl of agonized terror that made the forest ring. Finding him incapable of standing, he was roughly seized and conveyed to the place of execution, the while uttering the wildest shrieks and prayers for mercy.

But he might as well have appealed to the very stones or trees.

The executioners were evidently skillful hands at such work, and the howling wretch was quickly dangling from the rope's end.

It can readily be imagined that, as I had been wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, and the sight of the executioner, I caught the gleam of a light—only for an instant, but it was sufficient to mark my course.